



## CBRN Reconnaissance Platoon Executes Joint Mission With EOD Units

*By Captain Daniel Meany and Sergeant First Class Lashawn Lenore*

Most Stryker brigade combat team (SBCT) chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) reconnaissance platoons deploying to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) lack missions that leverage the unique and relevant skills of Military Occupational Specialty 74DL5. Many CBRN reconnaissance platoons, including that of the last rotation of the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (1/25) SBCT (then flagged as the 172d SBCT), are tasked with convoy escort or security detail. However, the Soldiers and leaders of the CBRN Reconnaissance Platoon, D Troop, 5-1 Cavalry Squadron, Brigade Troops Battalion (BTB), met their objective to provide a pertinent mission set to the 1/25 SBCT.

The SBCT is unique in that the entire CBRN reconnaissance platoon is assigned to the SBCT squadron by a modified table of organization and equipment, rather than attached like many reconnaissance platoons of other brigades. This provides the platoon with a solid, dependable, consistent chain of command from the platoon leader, through the troop and squadron commanders, to the brigade commander. If leveraged properly, the continuity in leadership and chain of command ensures that platoon training requirements and go-to-war paths are always met or exceeded and that the platoon is relevant and ready.

Two years ago, the 172d SBCT redeployed from OIF to Fort Wainwright, Alaska, and Staff Sergeant (now Sergeant

First Class) Lashawn Lenore (exclusively a 74D Soldier) transitioned from an infantry squad leader with C Company, 4-23 Infantry Battalion, to the section sergeant of the only SBCT CBRN platoon. He quickly departed to attend the CBRN Reconnaissance Course (L5) conducted at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Second Lieutenant (now Captain) Daniel Meany was also at Fort Leonard Wood, where he was completing the Basic Officer Leadership Course (BOLC) III. The L5 and BOLC III instructors emphasized sensitive-site exploitation (SSE), toxic industrial materials (TIMs), and toxic industrial chemicals (TICs) in the courses.

Following their coursework, Staff Sergeant Lenore and Second Lieutenant Meany returned to an assembled platoon at Fort Wainwright. Lenore convinced squadron leadership that all Soldiers should be L5-qualified. Eleven Soldiers subsequently attended the course, and all successfully completed it.

Five days after their return to Fort Wainwright, the platoon received three Fox M93A1 Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Reconnaissance System training vehicles. Six Soldiers simultaneously attended a Fox maintenance course. The platoon had all of the equipment and training necessary to begin their mission.

Staff Sergeant Lenore and Second Lieutenant Meany assessed the platoon mission-essential task list and determined



**CBRN Soldiers participate in hazmat reconnaissance training at a forward operating base in Iraq.**

that, although the Soldiers were L5-qualified, a platoon level culmination event was in order. Following a field training exercise (FTX) at Yukon Training Area, Fort Wainwright, the platoon was capable of performing any doctrinal CBRN reconnaissance mission. Nine days later, the platoon returned to Yukon Training Area to participate in squadron FTX 07-07. Their attempt to integrate into squadron level, contemporary operating environment-driven exercises demonstrated a gap in capability. It was apparent that, at a minimum, some dismounted competency would be required for rapid CBRN confirmation or denial.

After returning from FTX 07-07, Lenore and Meany discussed a shared vision designed to enable the platoon to provide combat power and make an active contribution. They considered the following threats to be the most likely to require CBRN reconnaissance:

- **Improvised explosive devices (IEDs).** IEDs were considered to be the most likely CBRN, TIM, or TIC threat. The discovery of IEDs requires initial explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) interrogation.
- **Manufacturing facilities.** Facilities that manufacture weapons of mass destruction or unknown bulk explosives also present opportunities for CBRN reconnaissance. These sites also require initial EOD interrogation.

Lenore and Meany further believed that the following unique core capabilities of 74DL5 Soldiers operating the M93A1P1 Fox could be leveraged against these most likely

CBRN threats while the Soldiers provided synergy in use and concurrent combat power:

- **Evidence collection.** L5 Soldiers are trained in evidence packaging and transportation procedures.
- **SSE.** Emerging CBRN doctrine addresses deliberate L5 search techniques.
- **Identification of unknown substances.** L5 Soldiers use the Fox system to confirm the presence of TICs and TIMs.
- **Mounted maneuver.** L5 Soldiers operate the M93A1P1 Fox, which is an independent, capable, lethal maneuver platform.

Because EOD involvement was necessary and already being conducted in conjunction with the most likely CBRN threats, Staff Sergeant Lenore and Second Lieutenant Meany focused on the opportunity to integrate and streamline joint operations. EOD operations require supported unit escort and forensic exploitation assistance, which (with additional training in the areas of warrior tasks/drills, dismounted reconnaissance [hazmat], and SSE weapons intelligence teams [WITs]) can be best provided by the SBCT CBRN reconnaissance platoon.

Before promoting the assumption of additional tasks, the platoon generated confidence through the competent execution of 5-1 Cavalry Squadron scout tasks. The platoon met the squadron commander's intent during numerous troop and squadron FTXs, military operations in urban terrain training, range performance under all conditions, and mounted gunnery operations. The dedicated execution of "warrior" tasks permitted the salesmanship of "scientific" tasks.

After persistent persuasion, the 5-1 Cavalry Squadron allocated \$15K for dismounted CBRN training. Based on guidance from the U.S. Army CBRN School commandant, Second Lieutenant Meany pursued off-the-market hazmat training, eventually securing the services of the Alaska West



**CBRN Soldiers conduct a dismounted assault during military operations in urban terrain training at Fort Wainwright, Alaska.**



Training Center, Fairbanks, Alaska. The center manager (who is also the hazmat team chief for the Fairbanks North Star Borough) used the professional knowledge he gained from working with the 103d Civil Support Team, Alaska, to help generate an appropriate hazmat technician level course.

The military intelligence background and advocacy of the D Troop commander was instrumental in obtaining the last remaining tactical site exploitation (TSE) (then referred to as SSE) training segment. Three Soldiers were enrolled in National Ground Intelligence Center WIT training, which consisted of a demanding, seven-week, advanced TSE course held at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. In the meantime, the platoon received two weeks of National Ground Intelligence Center TSE training, which covered latent print collection, combat scene photography, and physical evidence processing. Three Soldiers also attended master breacher training to familiarize themselves with military explosives used by EOD units. In an effort to spread TSE knowledge across the brigade, Staff Sergeant Lenore and First Lieutenant Meany developed a brigade TSE certification program to be presented to at least two Soldiers per maneuver battalion company. As a result, more than eighty Soldiers were TSE-certified in five 40-hour periods. This established a firm background in Soldier, dismounted CBRN, and TSE skills.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to accomplish every initiative. Joint integration training that had been planned to leverage the M93A1 Fox and unique developing capabilities of the 95th CBRN Company, Fort Richardson, Alaska, on a point reconnaissance was deferred. In addition, the Fairbanks

North Star Borough hazmat team had invited the CBRN Reconnaissance Platoon to provide knowledge depth on a volunteer basis; but because of the high-tempo training environment of the 5-1 Cavalry Squadron, time was too scarce. Lastly, the platoon had hoped to make use of the M1135 Stryker CBRN Reconnaissance Vehicle, but it was unavailable for fielding at the time of deployment. Overall, though, the equipment and training received before deployment was unequalled.

Before the CBRN Reconnaissance Platoon was involved in National Training Center Rotation 08-08, D Troop was detached from the 5-1 Cavalry Squadron and assigned to the 1/25 SBCT BTB for OIF 08-09. The BTB commander continued cultivating a progressive climate. Following the cancellation of the M1135 Stryker CBRN Reconnaissance Vehicle, the first updated M93A1P1 Fox Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Reconnaissance System was received at the National Training Center and slat armor and advanced command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance were installed. The platoon completed eight conventional CBRN reconnaissance missions, proving their capability to execute multiple missions before beginning scenario training. During the rotation, the platoon successfully completed joint security and evidence collection training with EOD personnel, enabling the conviction of an enemy role player in a simulated criminal court.

The CBRN Reconnaissance Platoon, D Troop, 5-1 Cavalry Squadron, BTB, deployed to the Diyala Province, Iraq, in September 2008 and has successfully conducted their



**The CBRN Reconnaissance Platoon conducts hazmat sustainment training at a forward operating base in Iraq.**



**The CBRN Reconnaissance Platoon and U.S. Navy EOD personnel respond to an IED strike in Iraq.**

envisioned mission through joint operations with Navy EOD Mobile Unit 12. The platoon provides rapid; full spectrum; chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives support to multiple battalions across an entire province twenty-four hours per day. During the past 11 months,

the platoon has conducted more than 500 combat missions, exploited more than 450 weapons caches and house-borne and other diverse IEDs, and come under contact. Specifically, the CBRN Reconnaissance Platoon, EOD, and task force WIT assets were directly responsible for evidence collection that led to the conviction of one of the brigade's most valued targets.

The CBRN Reconnaissance Platoon, D Troop, 5-1 Cavalry Squadron, BTB, has succeeded in providing a pertinent mission set to the 1/25 SBCT. However, this success could not have been realized without organizational support and the support of many dedicated Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and civilians. Without their selfless commitment, nothing would have been accomplished. Their daily efforts and devotion to duty are an inspiration to all.

"Arctic Wolves!"



**CBRN Soldiers and U.S. Navy EOD technicians prepare an enemy weapons cache for destruction in Iraq.**

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